

The Listening Post

A newsletter from the Kentucky Talking Book Library

Number 48

Summer 2007

Urgent—Support Digital Talking Books

As you may know, the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) has been working on a plan to convert Talking Books from cassette to a digital format. The cost of this transition is \$76.4 million over a four-year period, or \$19.1 million a year for each of the next four years. On June 12 the House Appropriation Committee met to determine how much will be funded for this program next year.

The subcommittee recommended that only \$7.5 million be awarded for digital conversion in 2008. Two amendments were proposed in the full committee meeting: the Republicans requested that money be taken from Capitol construction to provide the full \$19.1 million; the Democrats requested to add \$5 million from the Government Printing Office for a total of \$12.5 million. The Democrats' amendment passed but this is less than 2/3 of the amount needed to keep the digital transition on schedule. The issue goes before the Senate June 18-22.

What does this mean to you? Fewer Digital Talking Book players and books will be produced. Instead of taking 4 years for everyone to receive digital players, and for all new books to be digital, it will take much longer. Meanwhile, cassettes have become obsolete. The existing cassette players and books will continue to deteriorate with use, and it is becoming more difficult for libraries to purchase blank cassettes and adequate duplication equipment.

NLS has spent almost 15 years researching and developing the digital Talking Books. The USB flash cartridge books and players were chosen over commercial CDs or MP3 players because they are robust enough to withstand multiple users and mailing, they are easier to use by those with limited sight and dexterity, they will support Braille labeling, and the special format complies with U.S copyright and free matter mailing restrictions.

The Talking Books program essentially serves as the public library for those who are blind, visually impaired, or physically disabled. It is not too late to show your support for digital Talking Books. Contact your congressman and/or senator and tell them how much Talking Books mean to you. Call your local public library to find who your congressman is and how to reach him. Kentucky's senators are:

Sen. Mitch McConnell
361-A Russell Senate Office Bldg
Washington DC 20510
202-224-2541
website: mcconnell.senate.gov

Sen. Jim Bunning
316 Hart Senate Office Bldg
Washington DC 20510
202-224-4343
website: bunning.senate.gov

Digital Talking Book News

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) is developing a new digital talking book and player. It will be smaller, lighter, easier to use, and have improved sound. You will no longer have to change sides or rewind tapes, and most books will fit on a single cartridge.

We are scheduled to receive our first players in fall of 2008. There will not be enough to go around, so veterans will get machines first, then 10² Club members. NLS estimates that it will take about 4 years for everyone to get a digital machine. Even after you receive a digital player, you will probably want to use a cassette machine for a while. Cassette books will still be made (in addition to digital books) until 2011. You may also want to use a cassette player to listen to older books.

On February 17 machine #1,248,113 became the last NLS cassette player made. Because there will be no more new cassette players, we ask you to take good care of the equipment on loan to you. We will rely on our volunteer repair groups more than ever until cassette players are completely phased out. If you have a cassette player you are not using, please return it to us so someone else may borrow it. Meanwhile, read the latest news about digital talking books and players in each issue of *Talking Book Topics*.

Attention Veterans

To honor you for the time spent serving your country, federal regulations state that you will be the first to receive new digital talking book players in 2008. But first, we need to know who you are. Please call us, email us, or write to us to let us know you are a veteran of the U.S. military service.

We Want Your Advice

KTBL has some decisions to make with the upcoming transition to digital talking books, and we want your input. We are looking for 10-12 volunteers to form a KTBL Advisory Team. You will assist us in forming policies such as determining who gets digital players after veterans and 10² Club members, and what determines a patron in good standing. This team may also suggest additional materials or services to be provided by KTBL. We will arrange to communicate by email, telephone, or mail. If you are interested in serving on such a committee for 1-2 years, please call Barbara Penegor at 1-800-372-2968, ext. 282.

One Milestone and Many Thanks

The last reel-to-reel book recorded here at KTBL was *The Magic City* by Ann Dudley Mathany. On June 8 KTBL converted our second recording booth from that outdated format to digital technology. This will allow our new Kentucky books to have improved sound quality and for us to be ready for the upcoming NLS transition to Digital Talking Books. We can also use the digital system to edit and improve sound quality on some of our older Kentucky books.

Not only will we want to recruit more volunteers for recording in the second booth, but we want to thank those who have contributed their time and effort so that you can enjoy books about Kentucky. KTBL currently has 23 volunteers who have contributed 463 hours to produce 20 books so far this year. We thanked them during Volunteer Appreciation Week in April by awarding each a \$25 bookstore gift certificate (from an anonymous donor) and homemade goodies from our staff.

Kentucky Gets a New State Librarian

Wayne Onkst became Kentucky's new State Librarian and Commissioner on November 16, 2006. The London (KY) native received his library degree from the University of Kentucky, and has spent his entire 27-year-career with the Kenton County Public Library, serving as director since 1999. He is a respected member of the library community who has received several awards.

The Kenton County Library in Covington is home to the Northern Kentucky Talking Book Library, so not only is Wayne already familiar with Talking Books, he is a fan of the program. "Talking Books is a wonderful service. I've worked with the program for 25 years since the branch was established in Northern Kentucky, and I know how important it is to our patrons who use the service."

Wayne enjoys books by David Baldacci, Harlan Coben, and Nicholas Evans and listens to them frequently on his commute to and from Frankfort. He and his wife, Debbie, have two sons and currently live in Northern Kentucky.

Meet Our New Addition

Gary Harmon joined the KTBL circulation staff on April 16, replacing Caroline Barnett, who retired earlier this year. Gary's primary job is to pull correct book copies from the shelves and ship them to you, and to check in and shelve incoming books you have returned. He also enters new book copies into our computer system and puts them on the shelf.

Gary and his wife Vicki have been married for two years; they have no children, but have more cats that he can count. Gary loves music, and in 1996 he and some friends formed The Spare Change Band. They have performed at Caesar's Casino, both the Belle and the Star of Louisville, Kentucky Kingdom, and other area attractions. In his spare time Gary enjoys reading the works of Charles Dickens, John Irving, Edgar Allen Poe, and Stephen King.

Not Just Talking Books

KTBL wants to remind our readers that we have more to offer than just Braille and Talking books—we also offer magazines. The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) offers subscriptions to 75 magazines in Braille or on cassette tape. These magazines are mailed directly from the producer in a cardboard envelope, and do not need to be returned. Call your librarian for a complete list to see if your favorite magazine is available.

In addition to the NLS magazines, KTBL provides several magazines available through our office. These may or may not have to be returned to us. If it arrives in a cardboard envelope, you may keep it; if it arrives in a plastic mailing container (like our talking books) you must return it to us in order to receive future issues. Here is a list of the magazines we offer from our office. Call your librarian for more information, or to order.

- *Cats' Pause*—University of KY sports
 - *Back Home in Kentucky*—columns about KY's past and present
 - *Guideposts*—non-denominational inspiration
 - *Kentucky Afield*—outdoor and wildlife recreation
 - *Kentucky Living*—from KY Assoc. of Electric Co-ops
 - *Kentucky Monthly*—articles about the Bluegrass State
 - *Kentucky Humanities*—KY arts, history, subjects of interest
 - *Newsweek*—national current events
 - *Reader's Digest*—the old favorite, a variety of articles
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Summer Reading

It is not too late to sign up for the 2007 summer reading program. This year's theme is "Get a Clue @ Your Library". All you have to do is read books

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that contain an element of mystery, intrigue, or curiosity—either fictional or true, keep a log of what you've read, and enjoy yourself. Each book you read will enter a chance for you to win prizes, such as a small, personal 4-track cassette player and a digital voice recorder. Contact your librarian to sign up; the program ends August 1. We also encourage you to investigate your local public library to see what activities they have planned for the summer.

Check Your Machine for the Last Tape

Before returning a book, please make sure that you have replaced all the cassettes in the mailing container. This includes looking in your cassette player. Lately we have been hearing from quite a few readers who confess to having mailed a book back while leaving the last cassette in the machine. Please be aware that the incomplete book may be sent to another patron because our we not aware that all the tapes are not in the box.

If you do notice that you have not returned all the tapes for a certain book, please call your librarian. She can tell you what to do to get the “orphaned” tape back to us, and she can remove the incomplete book from the shelves until we can get the tapes returned to the correct container.

Service at a Temporary Address

If you change your Talking Book service to a temporary address, please note that it may not be practical to change the address for the NLS magazines and catalogs that you receive. These publications are mailed directly from the producers, and all changes must be sent to a centralized mailing facility in Florida. They process addresses in advance, so it takes 6-8 weeks for an address change to take effect. If you will be at an address for less than 4 months it will be better to leave a forwarding order with your Post Office or to have someone collect your magazines at your permanent address. *Talking Book Topics* is not considered a magazine by the U.S. Postal Service and will not be forwarded.

NFB Newsline

We have often heard that one of the things our patrons miss most after losing vision is the ability to read the newspaper. The National Federation for the Blind provides a service for you to “read” the paper using your telephone. Newsline is a free service that enables you to dial a toll-free number, day or night, to have the news read by a computerized voice.

There are currently 10 Kentucky newspapers available, as well as over 300 national papers and magazines. Newsline has recently added local television listings to its service so you will not miss you favorite shows. You use your touch-tone phone to select papers, navigate an issue, speed up or slow down

the voice, and customize the system to suit your specific tastes. Contact your librarian to sign up.

What's Your Name?

We often receive book request lists with no name on them. We have no way of knowing who wants these books, and have to simply throw the list away. This occurs most often with request forms from *Braille Book Review*. Please be sure to put your name, address, and telephone number on ALL correspondence. Helpful hint: use a pre-printed return address sticker instead of writing your name and address by hand.

Dates to Remember

KTBL will be closed on the following days:

July 4: Independence Day

September 3: Labor Day

If you call during regular work hours and get a recorded greeting, it means our staff is busy with other patrons, or we are in a meeting. Please leave a message and we will return your call as soon as possible.

Music is for Everyone

Are you musically inclined? Like to sing or play an instrument? You may be interested in the NLS Music Service. The special music collection consists of more than 30,000 Braille and large-print music scores and texts, cassette instructions on learning to play an instrument, and information about musicians and musicianship. Also available are subscriptions to publications about music. There are materials suitable for beginning to advanced levels, and the loan period is three months.

NOTE: This music service does not have recorded music for recreational listening. These are generally available from your local public library.

KTBL does not have these materials in our library—you can call the NLS Music section directly on their toll-free line at 1-800-424-8567. Unless you are a brand new patron, they will have your account information. You may call your KTBL librarian for more information.

Be Kind

Please Rewind All Cassette and Video Tapes

Important Items to Remember

Kentucky Talking Book Library

P O Box 537

Frankfort, KY 40602-0537

1-800-372-2968

1-502-564-8300 ext 276 (local)

Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. (Eastern time zone)

You may leave a voice mail message after hours.

We want you to enjoy Talking Books. Your librarian will tailor your service to suit your needs. She will be happy to assist you in any way possible. Please do not hesitate to call us for any of the following:

- **to make book requests**
- **with any questions or problems**
- **whenever your name, address, or telephone number changes**
- **to temporarily stop service**
- **if you want to change the types of books you get, or the number of books you receive**
- **when you have problems with books or machines**
- **if you want to change the format of your newsletters or catalogs**
- **to cancel your service**

Include your name, address, and telephone number on all correspondence, request lists, e-mails, and telephone messages.

Please return each book as soon as you finish it. The maximum loan period is 30 days.

Kentucky magazines and the cassette version of *The Listening Post* must be returned to KTBL within 30 days. Keeping the magazine or newsletter longer may prevent you from receiving future issues.

Remember to rewind all movies and cassette tapes before returning them.

Mark an "X" on the mailcard of any defective book. Do not mark on the cassette.

Take care of all cassette books, Braille books, and cassette players; keep them free of food, liquids, dust, and debris.

Please keep this list for future reference.

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1-800-372-2968



In providing information to readers of The Listening Post, the Kentucky Talking Book Library does not endorse any product or service referred to in this newsletter.

The Listening Post



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**KENTUCKY TALKING BOOK LIBRARY
P O BOX 537
FRANKFORT KY 40602-0537**

**FREE MATTER FOR THE
BLIND AND
PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED**



The Listening Post is available in large print, cassette, Braille, and email formats. Call 1-800-372-2968 to request another format.

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